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Massachusetts Lobster Fishery Statistics

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MASSACHUSETTS
DIVISION OF MARINE FISHERIES

1985
Massachusetts
Lobster Fishery
Statistics

by
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Department of Fisheries, Wildlife and Environmental Law Enforcement
Division of Marine Fisheries

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INTRODUCTION

The commercial lobster fishery of Massachusetts is the most economically important fishery conducted within the territorial waters of the Commonwealth. The overall economic importance of the fishery both in New England and, in recent years, the Mid-Atlantic states, has focused the attention of Federal, Regional and State fishery managers on this species. Initially, in an attempt to standardize management of the fishery, the Federal and State Governments developed an overall lobster fishery management plan under the auspices of the State-Federal Partnership Program. However, with the passage of the Fisheries Management and Conservation Act, the New England Fisheries Management Council, in cooperation with the Mid-Atlantic Council, has developed and implemented a management plan for the entire east coast lobster fishery. The basis and success of any such plan is an accurate statistical data base. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts, with joint funding from the National Marine Fisheries Service, has been collecting annual reports from licensed lobster fishermen for many years. Historically, the data collected was used primarily for descriptive and informational purposes, and occasionally for management. However, with the recent emphasis on Federal management, this data takes on added importance in terms of providing the respective management agencies with adequate information to ensure that the interests of Massachusetts' lobstermen are protected.

During the period 1975 - 1980, the number of coastal commercial lobster permits was limited, by law, to 1300, with an additional 10 percent issued to proven hardship cases. In 1981, a statutory change provided for the establishment of a permanent waiting list from which 100 new permits were issued. In addition, 30 special additional permits were awarded to full time commercial fishermen who met certain criteria. In subsequent years 80 list permits and 20 special additional permits have been issued. Permits which are not renewed are retired.

This report is the nineteenth annual publication of data summarized from catch reports submitted by licensed lobster fishermen. Data was presented in a standardized format through 1979. For the 1980 report, data presentation was changed to reflect a more thorough collection and evaluation of the data. The new presentation format is continued in this report. It is anticipated that this format will continue until such time as the Division implements computer processing of the data.

This report has been prepared by personnel from the Division of Marine Fisheries Commercial Fisheries Statistics Project, funded jointly by the Commonwealth and the National Marine Fisheries Service under the Commercial Fisheries Research and Development Act (Public Law 88-309). The preparation of this report would not have been possible without the cooperation of the licensed lobstermen who provided the data on their annual reports. Special thanks also go to Constance Lytle for her help with preparation of the text.

SOURCE OF DATA

No person may fish for or take lobsters in coastal waters or land lobsters in the Commonwealth without a permit issued by the Director of the Division of Marine Fisheries (Chapter 130, Mass. G.L., Section 38). Chapter 130, Mass. G.L., Section 23, requires any person so licensed to file an annual report of their catch by January 31 for the preceding calendar year. In 1980, a dual reporting system was established. Commercial lobstermen (coastal, offshore and seasonal) received a detailed catch report form with their license renewal application. This report requests the following information: method of fishing; number and type of gear used; effort data (set-over day, average number of trips per month, etc.); pounds of lobster taken; areas fished; principal ports of landing; and information relative to the vessels used in the fishery. Recreational fishermen are asked to report only the number of lobsters taken the previous year on their license.renewal application form.

Project personnel sort, edit, tabulate and interpret data from all reports received. Data presented in this booklet are based on catch reports actually received and are not expanded to 100 percent levels.

EXPLANATION OF TABLES

All data presented in this booklet are broken down into two basic categories: the first is "inshore" which represents all data pertaining to all lobster activity taking place within 69 degrees West Longitude and 41 degrees North Latitude; the "offshore" category refers to all data outside of the given coordinates.

Tables presenting number of fishermen by license type, number of pots fished, number and value of boats used in the fishery and total landings statewide, by county and for each city and town were prepared using the catch reports submitted by all commercial fishermen. In keeping with Division policy, some of the data is masked or combined to protect the confidentiality of the individual submitting the report. Data referring to the number of fishermen, number and value of gear, and number and value of boats are presented by the home port of the licensee filing the report. Pounds of lobsters harvested are presented by the port of landing reported by the fishermen.

Where tabular materials refers to county, the reader is referred to Figure 3. Fishing areas are delineated in Figure 2.

Vessel and SCUBA gear values were calculated on the basis of the fishermen's estimate of its present value and the percentage of its use specifically for lobstering. Average values were used when the information was omitted from an individual report.

When fishermen reported the number of lobsters taken, rather than poundage, a conversion factor of 1.18 pounds per lobster was used to calculate poundage figures. This factor is based on historical data.

1985 HIGHLIGHTS

1. There were 13,982 lobster licenses of all types issued during 1985: 1,744 coastal commercial; 188 seasonal commercial; 673 offshore and 11,377 non-commercial. See Table 1.

2. A total of 3,704 licensed lobstermen (26 percent) failed to file a catch report with the Division. Of the 10,278 fishermen reporting, 1951 (19 percent) reported that they did not fish for lobsters during 1985.

3. A total of 14,560,107 pounds of lobsters were reported landed. Of these, recreational fishermen reported taking 357,024 pounds, while commercial fishermen reported taking 14,203,083 pounds. Based on a value of $2.47 per pound[1], the commercial catch was valued at $35,081,615.

4. Commercial fishermen comprised 23 percent of the total number of fishermen reporting and landed 98 percent of the total catch.

5. Non-commercial SCUBA divers represented 23 percent of the fishermen reporting, but landed only 0.4 percent of the total poundage.

6. In total pounds of lobsters landed Essex County ranked first, Plymouth County second and Suffolk County third.

7. In total numbers of commercial fishermen, Essex County ranked first with 675, Plymouth County second with 413, and Barnstable County third with 179.

8. In the commercial fishery, pots were valued at $13,151,515[2], diving gear at $91,088, and power and non-power boats at $39,955,482, yielding a total gear value of $53,198,085. Combined with the value of lobsters sold, $35,081,615, gives a total fishery value of $88,279,700.

9. Of the 14,203,803 pounds of lobsters landed commercially, 12,399,744 were reported taken inside of 69 degrees West and 41 degrees North, and of that number, 10,303,792 pounds were estimated to have been taken within the territorial waters of the Commonwealth.

10. More lobsters were landed in Boston, 1,454,523 pounds, than in any other Massachusetts port. Gloucester ranked second with 1,167,595 pounds followed by Plymouth with 1,078,835. See Table 12.

11. Landings by coastal commercial lobstermen rose steadily in the spring and early summer, peaked in July, August and September and then declined. The least amount of lobsters were landed in February and March. See Table 13.

12. According to coastal fishermen, the greatest number of lobsters taken inside 69 degrees West and 41 degrees North were from Boston Harbor (Area 4) followed by Beverly--Salem--Marblehead (Area 3) and Cape Ann (Area 2). See Table 13.

13. The average catch per trap haul for coastal fishermen was 0.649 pounds. For traps fished for one set-over day the average was 0.482; for those fished two days 0.627; and for three or more set-over days 0.719. See Figure 1 for a monthly breakdown within set-over days.

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[1]Ex-vessel price determined by weighted averages of prices listed in the National Marine Fisheries Service "Blue Sheet".

[2]Based on an average value of $32.50 per pot, including warp and buoys.

TABLE 1. Reporting Status of 1985 Lobster Licensees

Licenses Issued

Coastal Commercial	($200)	1,744
Seasonal Commercial	($ 50)	188
Offshore Commercial	($200)	673
Non-Commercial	($ 30)	11,377
	Total	13,982

Reporting Status

Type	Not Reporting	Reported "Not Fishing"	Reported "Fishing"
Coastal Commercial	27 (2%)	349 (20%)	1,368 (78%)
Seasonal Commercial	65 (35%)	15 (8%)	108 (57%)
Offshore Commercial	159 (24%)	347 (51%)	167 (25%)
Total Commercial	251 (10%)	711 (27%)	1,643 (63%)
Non-Commercial	3,453 (30%)	1,240 (11%)	6,684 (59%)
Grand Total	3,704 (26%)	1,951 (14%)	8,327 (60%)

TABLE 2. STATEWIDE TOTALS

1985 MASSACHUSETTS LOBSTER FISHERY
SUMMARY STATISTICS--COMMERCIAL

LICENSE TYPE	GEAR TYPE AND NUMBER		DIVING GEAR VALUE	POTS FISHED	POWER BOAT	BOAT VALUE	NON-POWER BOAT	BOAT VALUE	POUNDS OF LOBSTER
Taken Inside 69°W 41°N									
COASTAL	Diver	12	30,640		9	68,000	2	550	21,603
	Potman	1,307		360,276	1,284	29,112,811	79	40,872	11,868,034
	Both	38	60,448	8,242	38	689,620	6	1,129	221,632
SEASONAL	Potman	108		2,163	96	277,585	11	9,455	25,412
OFFSHORE	Trawl	103			99	883,015			178,789
	Potman	30		4,491	30	1,237,397			84,275
TOTAL		1,598	91,088	375,172	1,556	32,268,428	98	52,006	12,399,745
Taken Outside 69°W 41°N									
OFFSHORE	Trawl	17			17	220,180			56,080
	Potman	17		19,680	18	5,260,150			1,348,001
COASTAL	Potman	11		9,810	11	1,304,718			399,257
TOTAL		45		29,490	46	6,785,048			1,803,338
GRAND TOTAL		1,643	91,088	404,662	1,602	39,903,476	98	52,006	14,203,083

TABLE 3. BARNSTABLE COUNTY
1985 MASSACHUSETTS LOBSTER FISHERY
SUMMARY STATISTICS--COMMERCIAL

LICENSE TYPE	GEAR TYPE AND NUMBER	DIVING GEAR VALUE	POTS FISHED	POWER BOAT	BOAT VALUE	NON-POWER BOAT	BOAT VALUE	POUNDS OF LOBSTER
Taken Inside 69°W 41°N								
COASTAL	Diver 6	14,640		5	21,500	1	500	7,429
	Potman 130		31,425	124	2,816,292	10	8,660	838,057
	Both 7	6,497	1,040	7	65,820	3	479	17,345
SEASONAL	Potman 10		213	9	29,520			1,874
OFFSHORE	Trawl 20			17	135,960			44,407
	Potman							
TOTAL	173	21,137	32,678	162	3,069,092	14	9,639	909,112
Taken Outside 69°W 41°N								
OFFSHORE	Trawl							9,882
	Potman 3		2,790	3	594,550			703,539
COASTAL	Potman		600		20,683			11,830
*TOTAL	6		3,390	6	624,248			725,251
*GRAND TOTAL	179	21,137	36,468	168	3,728,340	14	9,639	1,638,363

*Totals do not match the sum of the columns due to masking of data to protect the confidentiality of individuals.

TABLE 4. BRISTOL COUNTY

1985 MASSACHUSETTS LOBSTER FISHERY
SUMMARY STATISTICS--COMMERCIAL

LICENSE TYPE	GEAR TYPE AND NUMBER	DIVING GEAR VALUE	POTS FISHED	POWER BOAT	BOAT VALUE	NON-POWER BOAT	BOAT VALUE	POUNDS OF LOBSTER
Taken Inside 69°W 41°N								
COASTAL	Diver							
	Potman	79	1,085	17,104	78	1,785,228		438,999
	Both							
SEASONAL	Potman	4		82	4	30,500		800
OFFSHORE	Trawl	10			10	87,630		6,955
	Potman	7		1,875	7	521,350		42,354
TOTAL		100	1,085	19,061	99	2,424,708		489,108
Taken Outside 69°W 41°N								
OFFSHORE	Trawl							3,091
	Potman	7		9,190	7	2,252,500		337,477
COASTAL	Potman	6		5,810	6	963,500		248,436
TOTAL		13		15,000	13	3,240,015		589,004
* GRAND TOTAL		115	1,085	34,061	114	5,664,723		1,078,112

*Totals do not match the sum of the columns due to masking of data to protect the confidentiality of individuals.

TABLE 5. DUKES COUNTY
1985 MASSACHUSETTS LOBSTER FISHERY
SUMMARY STATISTICS--COMMERCIAL

LICENSE TYPE	GEAR TYPE AND NUMBER	DIVING GEAR VALUE	POTS FISHED	POWER BOAT	BOAT VALUE	NON-POWER BOAT	BOAT VALUE	POUNDS OF LOBSTER
Taken Inside 69°W 41°N								
COASTAL	Diver		2,500					452
	Potman	29		4,340	29	420,812		129,637
	Both							
SEASONAL	Potman	5		95	4	12,375		945
OFFSHORE	Trawl							
	Potman			470		90,000		14,846
*TOTAL		37	2,500	4,905	35	523,187		145,880
Taken Outside 69°W 41°N								
OFFSHORE	Trawl							20
	Potman			500		156,550		27,000
COASTAL	Potman							3,716
TOTAL								30,736
*GRAND TOTAL		39	2,500	5,405	38	688,752		176,616

*Totals do not match the sum of the columns due to masking of data to protect the confidentiality of individuals.

TABLE 6. ESSEX COUNTY
1985 MASSACHUSETTS LOBSTER FISHERY
SUMMARY STATISTICS--COMMERCIAL

LICENSE TYPE	GEAR TYPE AND NUMBER		DIVING GEAR VALUE	POTS FISHED	POWER BOAT	BOAT VALUE	NON-POWER BOAT	BOAT VALUE	POUNDS OF LOBSTER
Taken Inside 69°W 41°N									
COASTAL	Diver	3	9,750		3	24,500			12,867
	Potman	557		152,430	544	12,399,170	38	11,705	5,359,169
	Both	12	9,615	1,973	12	189,700	1	200	37,622
SEASONAL	Potman	39		820	36	113,075	4	7,235	8,873
OFFSHORE	Trawl	49			47	362,528			68,825
	Potman	5		425	5	361,200			5,041
TOTAL		665	19,365	155,648	647	13,450,173	43	19,140	5,492,397
Taken Outside 69°W 41°N									
OFFSHORE	Trawl	8			8	111,090			27,778
	Potman								46,446
COASTAL	Potman								47,133
* TOTAL		10		3,200	10	781,625			121,357
GRAND TOTAL		675	19,365	158,848	657	14,231,798	43	19,140	5,613,754

*Totals do not match the sum of the columns due to masking of data to protect the confidentiality of individuals.

TABLE 7. NANTUCKET COUNTY
1985 MASSACHUSETTS LOBSTER FISHERY
SUMMARY STATISTICS--COMMERCIAL

LICENSE TYPE	GEAR TYPE AND NUMBER	DIVING GEAR VALUE	POTS FISHED	POWER BOAT	BOAT VALUE	NON-POWER BOAT	BOAT VALUE	POUNDS OF LOBSTER
Taken Inside 69°W 41°N								
COASTAL	Diver							
	Potman	5	846	5	65,500			36,522
	Both							
SEASONAL	Potman							
OFFSHORE	Trawl							568
	Potman							
TOTAL								37,090
Taken Outside 69°W 41°N								
OFFSHORE	Trawl							56
	Potman							
COASTAL	Potman							
TOTAL								56
* GRAND TOTAL		6	846	6	89,500			37,146

*Totals do not match the sum of the columns due to masking of data to protect the confidentiality of individuals.

TABLE 8. NORFOLK COUNTY
1985 MASSACHUSETTS LOBSTER FISHERY
SUMMARY STATISTICS--COMMERCIAL

LICENSE TYPE	GEAR TYPE AND NUMBER	DIVING GEAR VALUE	POTS FISHED	POWER BOAT	BOAT VALUE	NON-POWER BOAT	BOAT VALUE	POUNDS OF LOBSTER
Taken Inside 69°W 41°N								
COASTAL	Diver							
	Potman	69	20,344	68	1,629,804	5	2,950	758,919
	Both	5	8,358	5	127,200	1	200	37,828
SEASONAL	Potman	9	192	8	21,650	2	160	2,715
OFFSHORE	Trawl							
	Potman							
TOTAL		83	28,894	81	1,778,654	8	3,310	799,462
Taken Outside 69°W 41°N								
OFFSHORE	Trawl							
	Potman							
COASTAL	Potman							
TOTAL								
GRAND TOTAL		83	28,894	81	1,778,654	8	3,310	799,462

TABLE 9. PLYMOUTH COUNTY
1985 MASSACHUSETTS LOBSTER FISHERY
SUMMARY STATISTICS--COMMERCIAL

LICENSE TYPE	GEAR TYPE AND NUMBER	DIVING GEAR VALUE	POTS FISHED	POWER BOAT	BOAT VALUE	NON-POWER BOAT	BOAT VALUE	POUNDS OF LOBSTER
Taken Inside 69°W 41°N								
COASTAL	Diver							
	Potman	326		87,324	325	6,827,173	26	17,557	2,625,074
	Both	12	12,093	2,944	11	196,900	1	250	62,897
SEASONAL	Potman	41		761	35	70,465	5	2,060	9,875
OFFSHORE	Trawl	14			14	187,242			46,305
	Potman	15		1,321	15	229,847			18,034
TOTAL		408	12,093	92,350	400	7,511,627	32	19,867	2,762,185
Taken Outside 69°W 41°N								
OFFSHORE	Trawl								2,219
	Potman	5		5,400	5	1,206,550			279,971
COASTAL	Potman								
TOTAL		5		5,400	5	1,206,550			282,190
GRAND TOTAL		413	12,093	97,750	405	8,718,177	32	19,867	3,044,375

TABLE 10. SUFFOLK COUNTY
1985 MASSACHUSETTS LOBSTER FISHERY
SUMMARY STATISTICS--COMMERCIAL

LICENSE TYPE	GEAR TYPE AND NUMBER	DIVING GEAR VALUE	POTS FISHED	POWER BOAT	BOAT VALUE	NON-POWER BOAT	BOAT VALUE	POUNDS OF LOBSTER
Taken Inside 69°W 41°N								
COASTAL	Diver							
	Potman	113		46,638	112	3,175,832		1,683,752
	Both	3	26,550	1,400	3	125,000		64,700
SEASONAL	Potman							330
OFFSHORE	Trawl	9			10	85,655		11,729
	Potman							
TOTAL		125	26,550	48;038	125	3,386,487		1,760,511
Taken Outside 69°W 41°N								
OFFSHORE	Trawl	5			5	67,045		13,034
	Potman			3,000	2	550,000		41,710
COASTAL	Potman							
* TOTAL		7		3,000	7	617,045		54,744
GRAND TOTAL		132	26,550	51,038	132	4,003,532		1,815,255

*Totals do not match the sum of the columns due to masking of data to protect the confidentiality of individuals.

TABLE 11. OUT OF STATE

1985 MASSACHUSETTS LOBSTER FISHERY
SUMMARY STATISTICS--COMMERCIAL

LICENSE TYPE	GEAR TYPE AND NUMBER	DIVING GEAR VALUE	POTS FISHED	POWER BOAT	BOAT VALUE	NON-POWER BOAT	BOAT VALUE	POUNDS OF LOBSTER
Taken Inside 69°W 41°N								
COASTAL	Diver							
	Potman							7,306
	Both							
SEASONAL	Potman							
OFFSHORE	Trawl							
	Potman							
TOTAL								7,306
Taken Outside 69°W 41°N								
OFFSHORE	Trawl	6			6	54,090		80
	Potman							210,802
COASTAL	Potman							
TOTAL								210,882
* GRAND TOTAL		8		250	8	70,605		218,188

*Totals do not match the sum of the columns due to masking of data to protect the confidentiality of individuals.

TABLE 12. Pounds of lobsters landed by commercial fishermen (except seasonal) by city or town of landing in 1985.

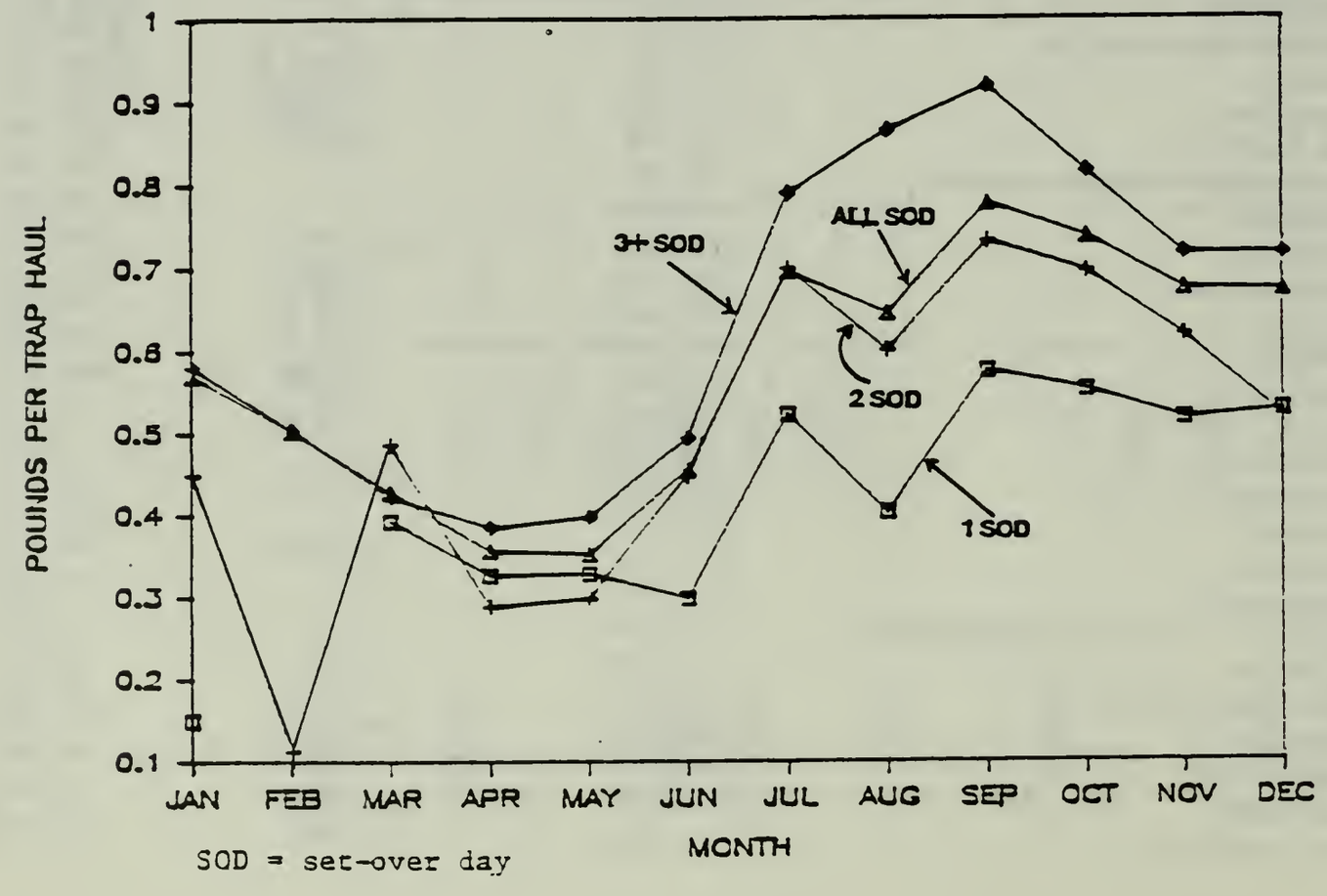
City/Town	Inside 69°W 41°N	Outside 61°W 41°N	Total
Barnstable	30,198	484,240	514,438
Beverly	738,955		738,955
Boston	1,399,779	54,744	1,454,523
Bourne	58,311		58,311
Chatham	136,582	12,459	149,041
Chilmark	131,930	30,736	162,666
Cohasset	627,147		627,147
Danvers	58,137		58,137
Dartmouth	12,911		12,911
Dennis-Yarmouth	60,602		60,602
Duxbury	43,261		43,261
Eastham	47,153		47,153
Essex	43,335		43,335
Fairhaven	109,907	241,470	351,377
Falmouth	20,880		20,880
Gloucester	1,087,515	80,080	1,167,595
Gosnold	6,476		6,476
Harwich	158,905	9,459	168,364
Hingham	426,143		426,143
Hull	244,326		244,326
Ipswich	56,412		56,412
Kingston	26,354		26,354
Lynn	324,709	11,786	336,495
Manchester	271,417		271,417
Marblehead	647,865	2,174	650,039
Marshfield	691,412	140	691,552
Mattapoisett-Marion	51,931	3,377	55,308
Nahant	393,992	25,233	419,225
Nantucket	37,090	56	37,146
New Bedford	107,102	63,333	170,435
Newburyport-Newbury-Rowley	84,647		84,647
Orleans	51,873		51,873
Plymouth	823,921	254,914	1,078,835
Provincetown	105,192	2,082	107,274
Quincy	73,598		73,598
Revere	139,055		139,055
Rockport	441,785	2,085	443,870
Salem	97,289		97,289
Salisbury	3,701		3,701
Sandwich	221,380	217,012	438,392
Saugus	689,622		689,622
Scituate	423,634	23,758	447,392
Swampscott	544,143		544,143
Tisbury - Oak Bluffs-Edgartown	6,530		6,530
Wareham	21,327		21,327
Wellfleet-Truro	20,162		20,162
Westport	258,388	284,201	542,589
Weymouth	96,001		96,001
Winthrop	221,347		221,347
Out-of-State	7,306	210,882	218,188

TABLE 13. Massachusetts commercial lobster landings inside 69°W and 41°N by month and area as reported by coastal commercial fishermen in 1985.

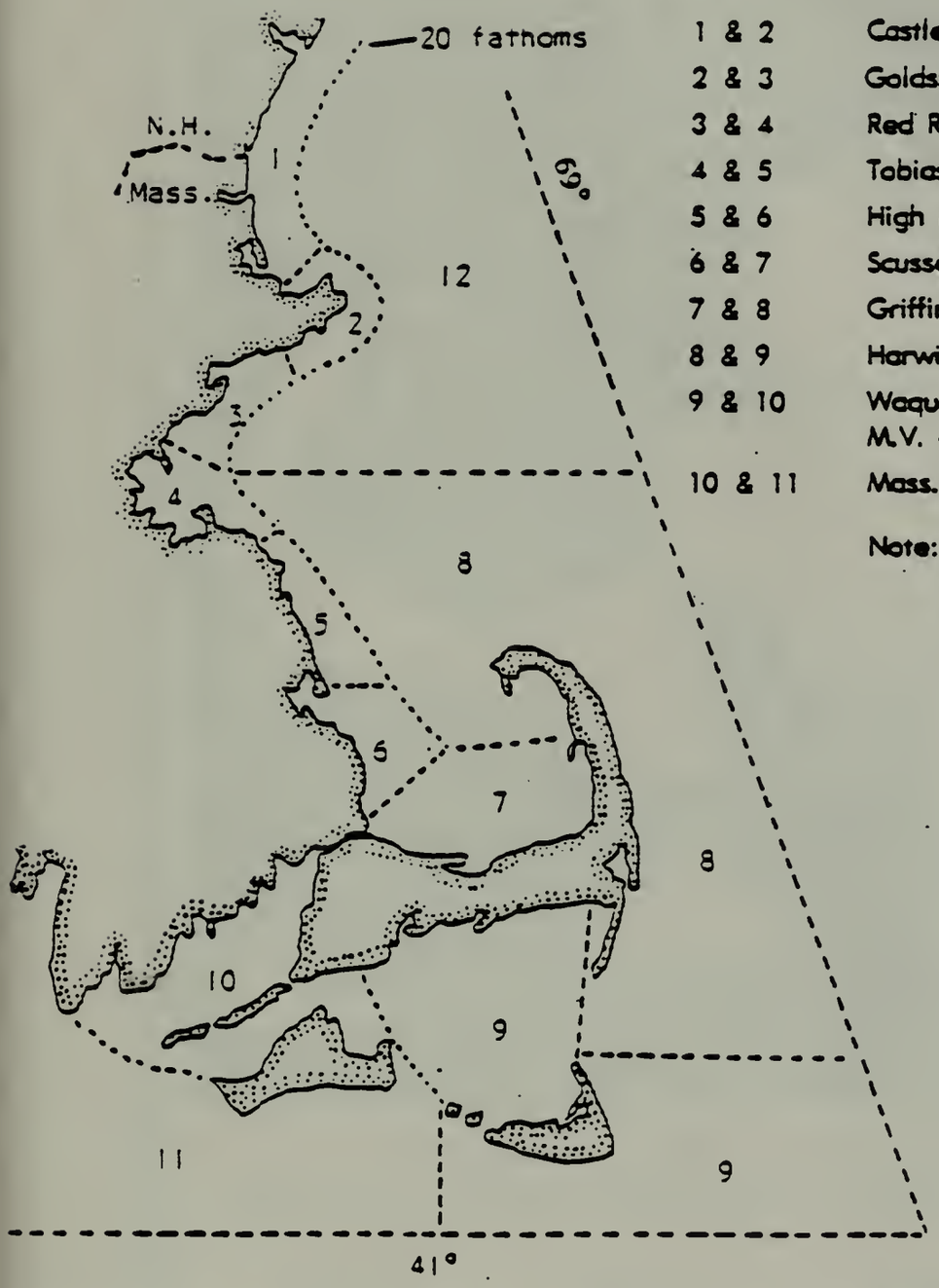
Month	Percent	Area	Percent
January	0.6	1	1.9
February	0.2	2	11.6
March	0.3	3	16.3
April	1.0	4	31.1
May	2.9	5	10.7
June	7.5	6	6.9
July	20.3	7	1.6
August	19.3	8	7.0
September	20.2	9	1.5
October	15.4	10	2.9
November	8.7	11	2.7
December	3.6	12	5.9
	100.0		100.1*

*Total does not equal 100 percent due to rounding of numbers.

Figure 1. 1985 Catch per unit of effort by set-over day for the Massachusetts coastal commercial lobster fishery.



LOBSTERING AREAS



Between Areas	BOUNDARIES
1 & 2	Castle Neck, Ipswich
2 & 3	Goldsmith Point, Manchester
3 & 4	Red Rock, Lynn
4 & 5	Tobias Ledge (Spindle), Scituate
5 & 6	High Pines Ledge, Plymouth
6 & 7	Scussett Beach, Sandwich
7 & 8	Griffin Island, Wellfleet
8 & 9	Harwich/Chatham Line
9 & 10	Waquoit Bay, Falmouth - Cape Poge, M.V. - Muskeget Island
10 & 11	Mass./R.I. Line - Gay Head

Note: The seaward boundary of Areas 1 through 7 is the 20 Fathom line.

Figure 2. Location and description of coastal lobster fishing areas in Massachusetts.

COASTAL MAP of MASSACHUSETTS
SHOWING STATISTICAL REPORTING AREAS (Counties)

1. Essex	3. Norfolk	5. Bristol	7. Dukes
2. Suffolk	4. Plymouth	6. Barnstable	8. Nantucket

Figure 3